(b) The percentage of women employees in Public Sector Undertaking Banks and other Public Sector Undertakings as on 31st March, 2001 is approximately 10%.

(c) The right to equal opportunity for women to seek employment in Government including Public Sector Undertakings is enshrined in the Constitution itself and there is no discrimination in this regard on gender basis.

Sugar buffer stock

*159. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether farmers are lobbying for sugar buffer stock;

(b) if so, the details of their proposals; and

(c) the action proposed by Government on the farmers' suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c) While no suggestion have been received, individually, from farmers in this behalf, a Buffer Stock of 20 lakh tonnes of sugar has recently been created for a period of one year. As a result thereof, there will be an outgo of Rs. 412 crores from the Sugar Development Fund, in addition to which about Rs. 374 crores are expected to be released by Banks on account of the Buffer Stock. Thus about Rs. 786 crores would become available to the sugar industry for the payment of cane price dues to the farmers.

Modifications in rice export policy

†*160. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any modifications have been made recently in the rice export policy;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof and percentage of 'broken rice allowed to be exported; and

(c) the steps taken to make export of Indian rice competitive?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c) As per the Exim Policy, the export of basmati rice is free, subject to registration of contract with the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).The export of non-basmati rice is entirely free.

2. In view of the surplus stocks of rice in the Central Pool, the available rice is being supplied through the Food Corporation of India to Public Sector Undertakings, State Agencies and private exporters for purpose of export. For the rice offered from the Central Pool stocks, the exporters are allowed operational allowance of 2% on Bill of Lading in rice shipment and are required to submit export documents for the remaining 98% of the quantity lifted from the FCI. Indian exporters (who lift stocks from the FCI) are exploring the overseas markets and competing with others. Appropriate steps are taken to facilitate Indian exports, from time to time, depending upon the prevailing circumstances.

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WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Industrial development in Assam

922. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH :Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the rural industries development schemes under implementation in Assam;

(b) the increase in production and employment registered in these industries; and

(c) the details of the funds allotted/sanctioned, released and utilised for this purpose during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM) : (a) The Government through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) promotes development of rural industries by way of financial, technical and managerial assistance, besides, the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) is implemented throughout the country (including the State of Assam). Under this scheme, 25% of the project cost is provided as margin money). For project cost above Rs. 10 lakhs and upto Rs. 25